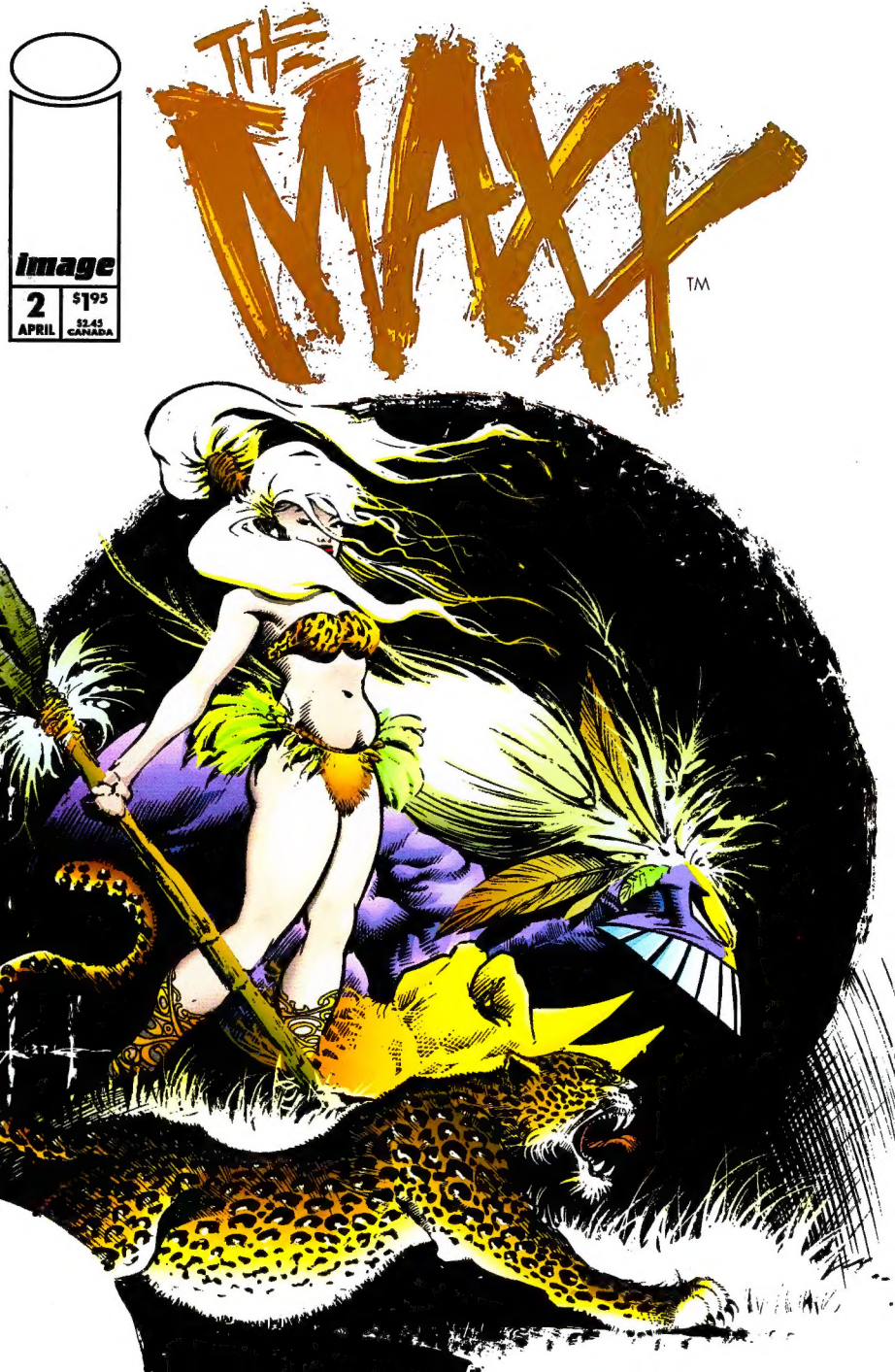

THE MASK
TM
image
2
APRIL
$1.95
$2.45 CANADA

image™ COMICS PRESENTS

THE MAXX™

Story • Pencils • Inks
SAM KIETH

Dialogue
BILL MESSNER-LOEBS

Finishes
JIM SINCLAIR

Lettering
MIKE HEISLER
KEVIN CUNNINGHAM

Color
STEVE OLIFF & OLYOPTICS

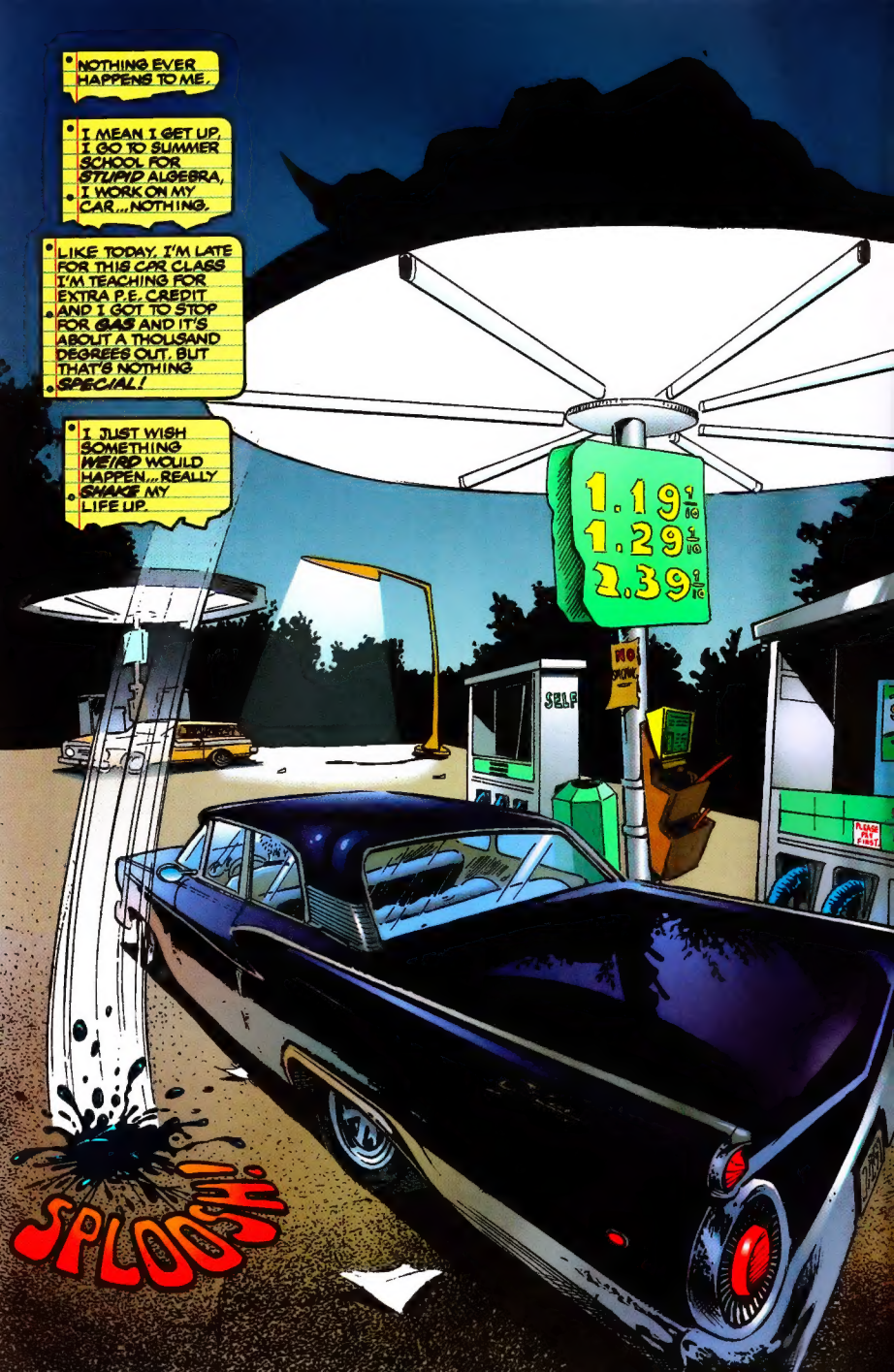
Logo
CHANCE WOLF

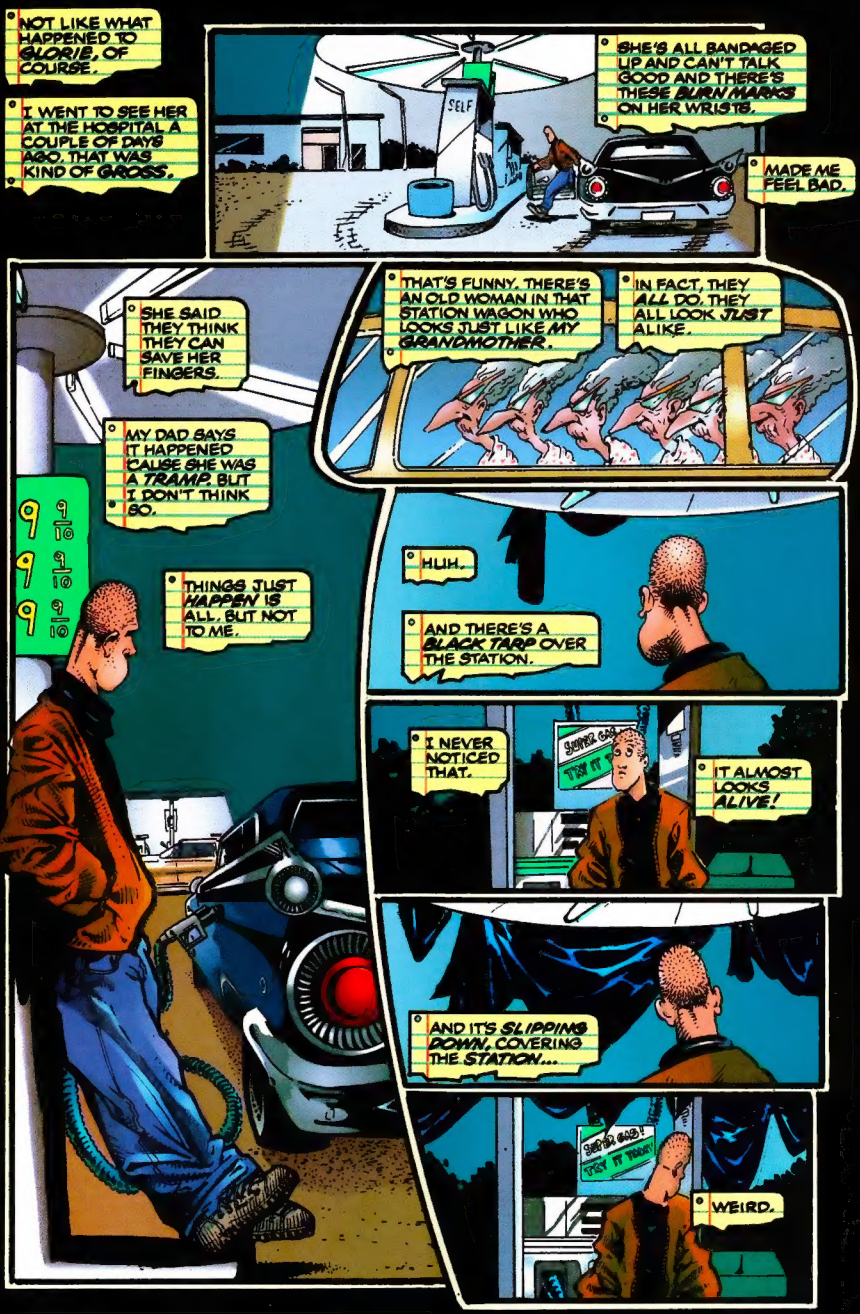
FOR IMAGE COMICS:

Publisher	**TONY LOBITO**
Promotions	**KYLE ZIMMERMAN**
Distribution	**GERMAINE ZACHARIAH**
Production Manager	**MARIKA BRISTOL**
Art Director	**DOUG GRIFFITH**
Administrative Assistant	**KELLY VAN LANDINGHAM**

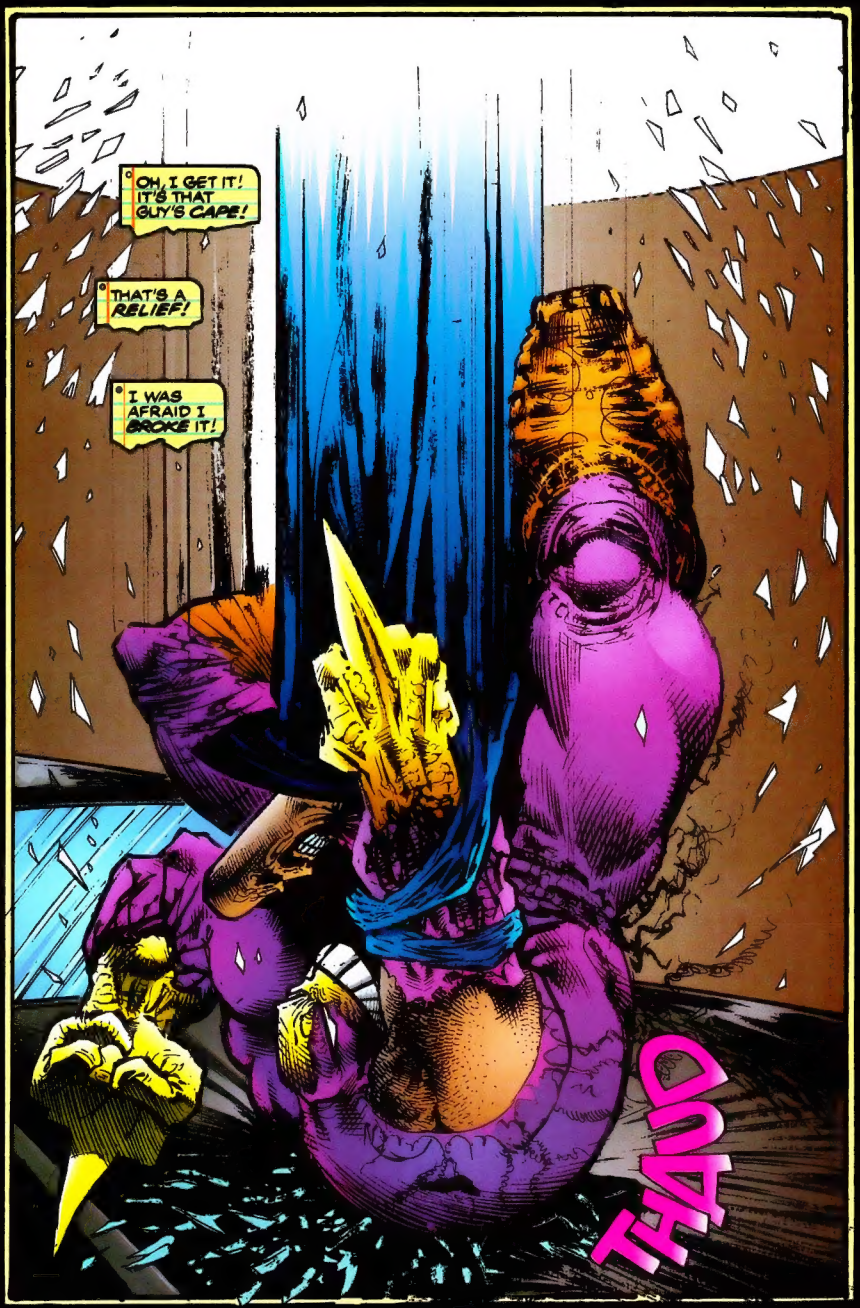
MAXX #2. April 1993. FIRST PRINTING. An Image Comics Group title published by Image Comics. Entire contents TM & © 1993 by Sam Kieth, all rights reserved. "We mean it!" any similarities to persons living or dead is purely coincidental. With the exception of artwork used for review purposes, none of the contents of this publication may be reprinted without the permission of Sam Kieth. Send correspondence to: Sam Kieth, 4363 Hazel Avenue, Suite 1-285, Fair Oaks, California, 95628. Publishers and creator assume no responsibility for unsolicited materials. Ya gotta stop reading tiny print, it'll hurt your eyes!! Printed in Canada

THREE WHOLE WEEKS OF DIETING... COTTAGE CHEESE AND FRUIT PLATES AND YOGURT...
...AND SHE'S GAINED FIVE POUNDS?
MAYBE THERE WAS SOMETHING IN THE FRIDGE, SOMETHING UNFATTENING... SOMETHING NICE...
Oh... POOP!
SUGAR
MEEP!
MOO COW
LOWFAT MILK
MEEP
MEEP
MEEP
MEEP
MEEP
Snatchh!
MEEP
MEEP


NOTHING EVER HAPPENS TO ME.
I MEAN I GET UP, I GO TO SUMMER SCHOOL FOR STUPID ALGEBRA, I WORK ON MY CAR... NOTHING.
LIKE TODAY. I'M LATE FOR THIS CAR CLASS I'M TEACHING FOR EXTRA P.E. CREDIT AND I GOT TO STOP FOR GAS AND IT'S ABOUT A THOUSAND DEGREES OUT. BUT THAT'S NOTHING SPECIAL!
I JUST WISH SOMETHING WEIRD WOULD HAPPEN... REALLY SHAKE MY LIFE UP.
1.19 9/10
1.29 9/10
1.39 9/10
SELF
PAY AT FIRST
SPLOOSH!


NOT LIKE WHAT HAPPENED TO GLORIE, OF COURSE.
I WENT TO SEE HER AT THE HOSPITAL A COUPLE OF DAYS AGO. THAT WAS KIND OF GROSS.
SELF
SHE'S ALL BANDAGED UP AND CAN'T TALK GOOD AND THERE'S THESE BURN MARKS ON HER WRISTS.
MADE ME FEEL BAD.
SHE SAID THEY THINK THEY CAN SAVE HER FINGERS.
MY DAD SAYS IT HAPPENED 'CAUSE SHE WAS A TRAMP. BUT I DON'T THINK SO.
THINGS JUST HAPPEN IS ALL. BUT NOT TO ME.
9 9/10
9 9/10
9 9/10
THAT'S FUNNY. THERE'S AN OLD WOMAN IN THAT STATION WAGON WHO LOOKS JUST LIKE MY GRANDMOTHER.
IN FACT, THEY ALL DO. THEY ALL LOOK JUST ALIKE.
HUH.
AND THERE'S A BLACK TARP OVER THE STATION.
I NEVER NOTICED THAT.
IT ALMOST LOOKS ALIVE!
AND IT'S SLIPPING DOWN, COVERING THE STATION...
WEIRD.

MAYBE IT'S SOME KIND OF AUTOMATIC SUNSHADE.
BUT YOU CAN'T SEE TO PUMP GAS IN THERE.
WHAT IF THERE'S A SWITCH...?
IF I WAS TO FLIP ON THIS THING REALLY HARD...
FFOOSSH!
FFOOSSH!
FFOOSSH!


OH, I GET IT! IT'S THAT GUY'S CAPE!
THAT'S A RELIEF!
I WAS AFRAID I BROKE IT!
THUD

COURSE, NOW I GOT TWO BIG GUYS, FIGHTING, ON THE HOOD OF MY CAR.
GIVE IT UP, BRER LAPP!N! YOU...GASP...KNOW JULIE WINTERS IS THE ONE I WANT! SHE'S...WHEEZE... THE STRONG ONE...
THE ONE WHO PULLS ...HANT... YOUR STRINGS!
IT'S KIND OF NEAT, ACTUALLY.
UHHH... WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?
AND WHO THE HELL ARE YOU?
WHUM!

YOU REALLY DON'T REMEMBER ANYTHING IMPORTANT, DO YOU, BR'ER LAPPIN?

I'M MR. GONE!... A STUDENT OF THE MYSTIC ARTS!

UNFORTUNATELY, AN UNTALENTED STUDENT, OR I WOULDN'T HAVE TO KEEP SHOOTING FOOLS LIKE YOU!

HEY! PUT THAT DOWN, OR I'LL—

KRATTCHHH!

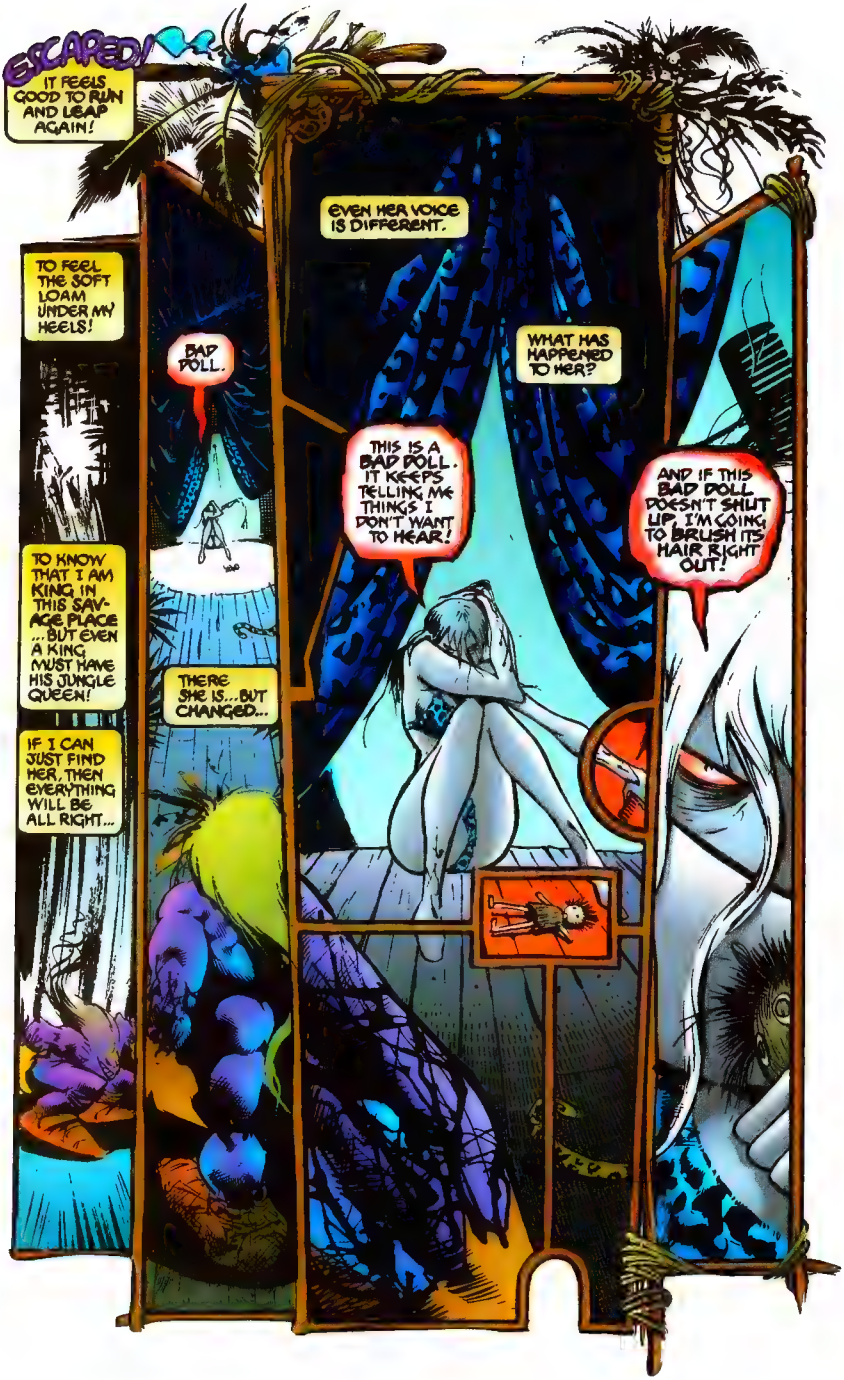
I THOUGHT I SAW A WOMAN IN THERE!

NOW SURRENDER, HOPPING-BOY, OR THIS CHARMING YOUNG CHIPPIE IS ADDED TO MY SCORE!

MY HOSTAGE. YOU K!LLED MY HOSTAGE!
CRUNCH
YOUK! LLEDMYH OSTAGEYOUK !LLEDMY HOST AGE YOUK!L LED
BAM
WHUMP!
NEVER DO THAT AGAIN!
OUCHIE.
UMM...DO YOU WANT ME TO CALL FOR AN AMBULANCE OR SOMETHING?
BROTHER, N0TH!NG'S EASY.

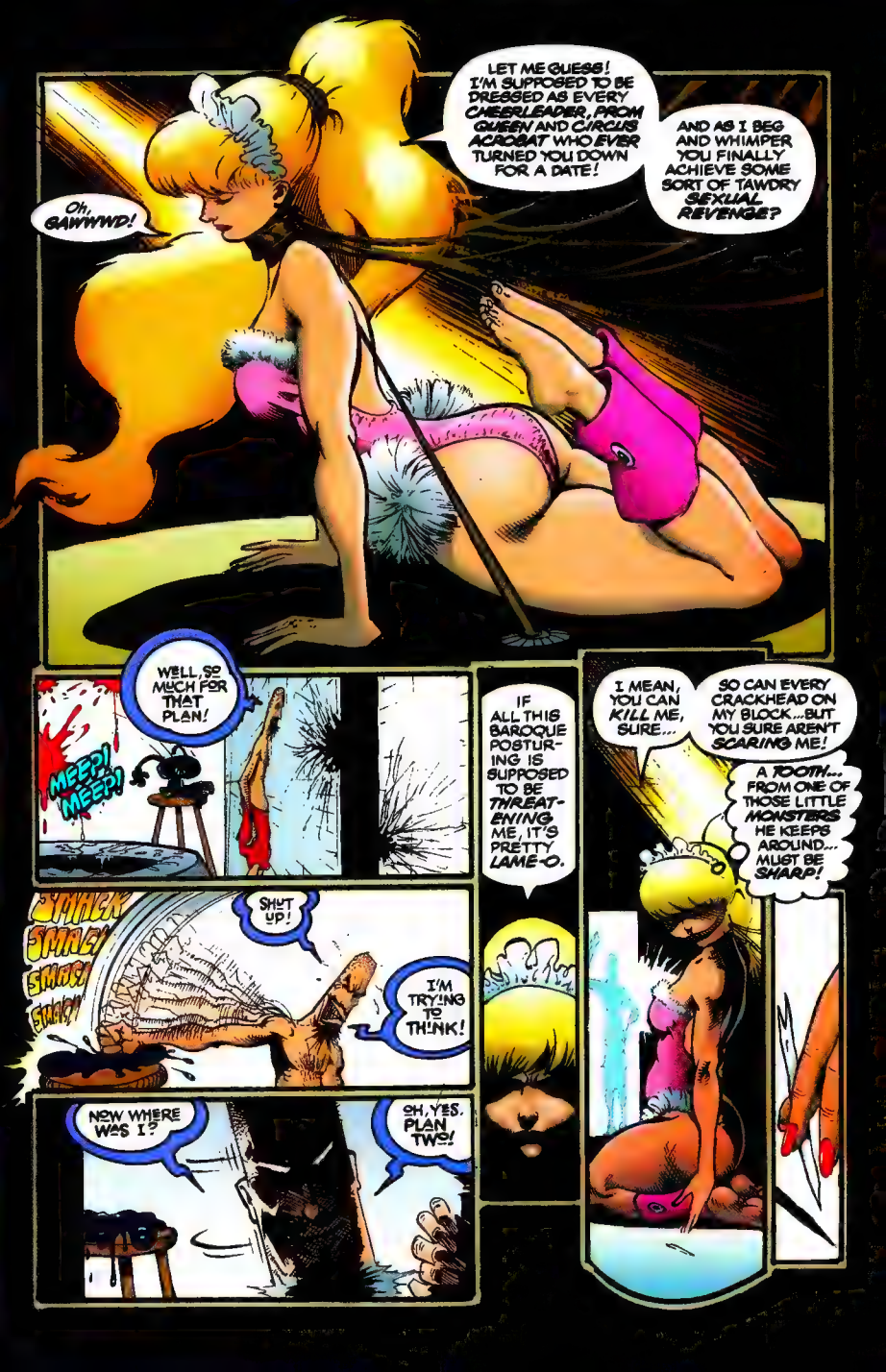
THAT WAS REALLY SMART, HOW YOU REALIZED THAT WAS MY CPR PRACTICE DUMMY... uh...
YOU DID REALIZE THAT WAS MY CPR PRACTICE DUMMY, RIGHT, MISTER?
RIGHT...?
A DUMMY?
UH, RIGHT.
YAAAAAA!
IT WAS THE LITTLE OLD LADIES. THEY MUST'VE JUMPED OUT OF THE STATION WAGON FROM BEFORE.
I WAS STARTING TO THINK IT WAS GETTING PRETTY HAZARDOUS AROUND HERE.
WELL, IT WAS NICE TO MEET YOU... I GOTTA BE GOING NOW...
HE DIDN'T SAY ANYTHING. BUT THEN HE WAS PRETTY BUSY.

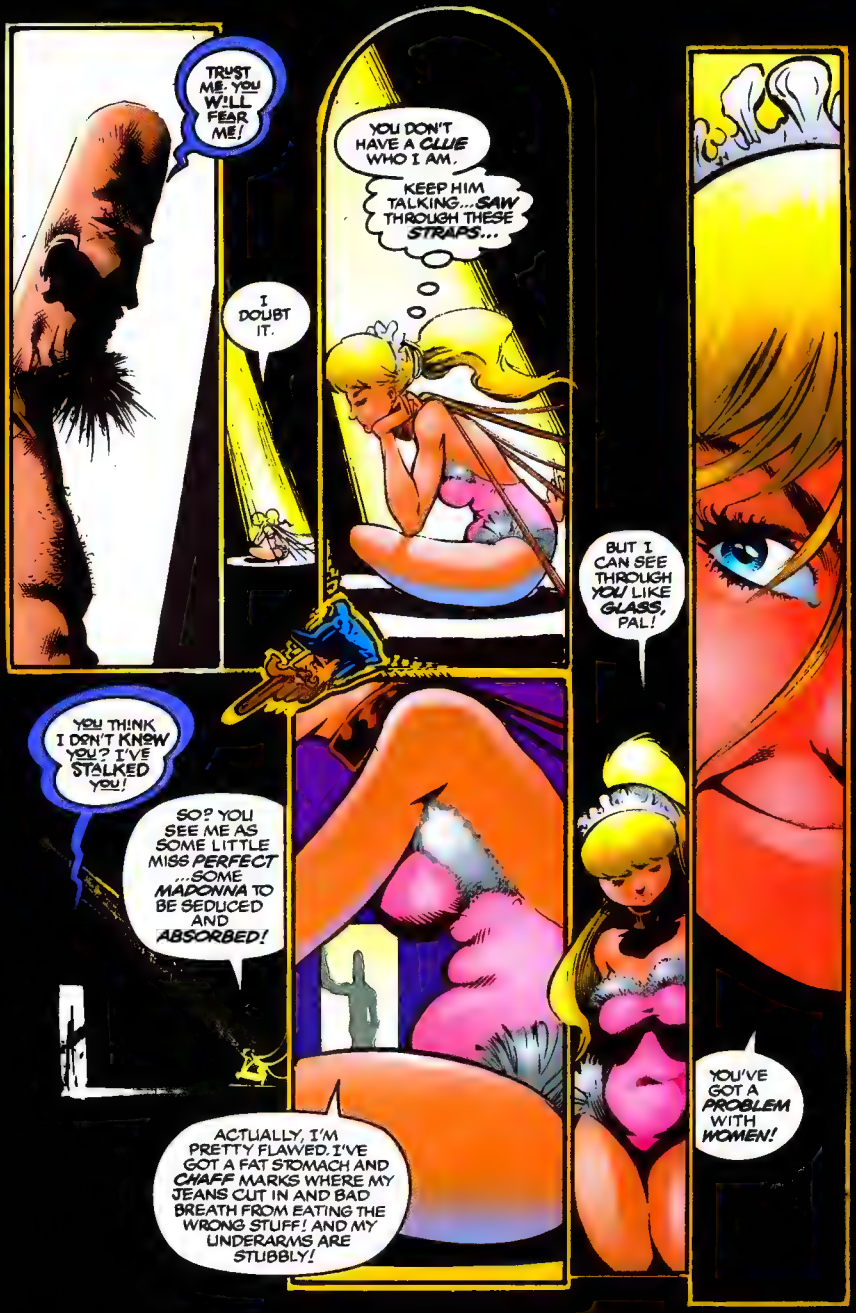
I GUESS HE'S THE SORT OF GUY THINGS HAPPEN TO ALL THE TIME.
YAAAAAA!
TOO... MANY... CAN'T FIGHT THEM ALL...
BLACKING OUT... LOST TOO MUCH BLOOD... PAIN... HAVE TO FIND... JULIA...
GOTTA DATE WITH AN ANGEL...
AH-HA!
CRUNCH!
THERE!
AND THAT SHOULD COVER YOU NICELY.
AFTER ALL, WE DON'T WANT THE LOCALS SEEING GRANNIES CLIPPED TO TRASH BINS BY THEIR TEETH...


ESCAPED!
IT FEELS GOOD TO RUN AND LEAP AGAIN!
TO FEEL THE SOFT LOAM UNDER MY HEELS!
TO KNOW THAT I AM KING IN THIS SAVAGE PLACE ...BUT EVEN A KING MUST HAVE HIS JUNGLE QUEEN!
IF I CAN JUST FIND HER, THEN EVERYTHING WILL BE ALL RIGHT...
BAD DOLL.
THERE SHE IS...BUT CHANGED...
EVEN HER VOICE IS DIFFERENT.
WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO HER?
THIS IS A BAD DOLL. IT KEEPS TELLING ME THINGS I DON'T WANT TO HEAR!
AND IF THIS BAD DOLL DOESN'T SHUT UP, I'M GOING TO BRUSH ITS HAIR RIGHT OUT!

ELSEWHERE, ON THE PASTEL, DECAYING, ART DECO SIDE OF TOWN...
I RAN INTO YOUR FRIEND MAXX TODAY, JULIE.
HE STILL HASN'T GOT A CLUE THAT YOU'RE THE KEY TO ALL THIS. HE THINKS HE'S SOME KIND OF SUPERHERO ON THIS WORLD. CAN YOU IMAGINE?
I KILLED HIM, OF COURSE. SHOT HIM AND LOCKED HIM IN A DUMPSTER WITH A HANDFUL OF THE DARK ISES. THEY TURN MEAT-EATERS WHEN YOU BRING THEM OVER. DID YOU KNOW THAT?
POP
POP
POP
AHHH... LIFE IS GOOD!

THE !SMS ARE PRETTY !NTERES!NG...
SPLAT
D!D YOU KNOW THAT TO HUMANS THEY APPEAR AS WHATEVER YOU DRESS THEM AS?
THAT'S WHY I SET UP SHOP !N TH!S OLD COST!ME WAREHOUSE... PRETTY CLEVER, EH?
OF COURSE, THE BULLDOG JAR RUBBER FACTORY UPSTA!RS ST!LL SMELLS OF DECAY!NG RUBBER...
BUT I TH!NK THAT JUST ADDS TO THE AMBIENCE, DON'T YOU?
NOT THAT YOU'RE !N ANY POS!T!ON TO COMPLAIN...
!N FACT, I CAN DO ANYTH!NG TO YOU I WANT...


Oh, GAWWWD!
LET ME GUESS! I'M SUPPOSED TO BE DRESSED AS EVERY CHEERLEADER, PROM QUEEN AND CIRCUS ACROBAT WHO EVER TURNED YOU DOWN FOR A DATE!
AND AS I BEG AND WHIMPER YOU FINALLY ACHIEVE SOME SORT OF TAWDRY SEXUAL REVENGE?
WELL, SO MUCH FOR THAT PLAN!
MEEP! MEEP!
IF ALL THIS BAROQUE POSTURING IS SUPPOSED TO BE THREATENING ME, IT'S PRETTY LAME-O.
I MEAN, YOU CAN KILL ME, SURE...
SO CAN EVERY CRACKHEAD ON MY BLOCK...BUT YOU SURE AREN'T SCARING ME!
A TOOTH... FROM ONE OF THOSE LITTLE MONSTERS HE KEEPS AROUND... MUST BE SHARP!
SHUT UP!
I'M TRYING TO THINK!
SMACK SMACK SMACK SMACK
NOW WHERE WAS I?
OH, YES. PLAN TWO!

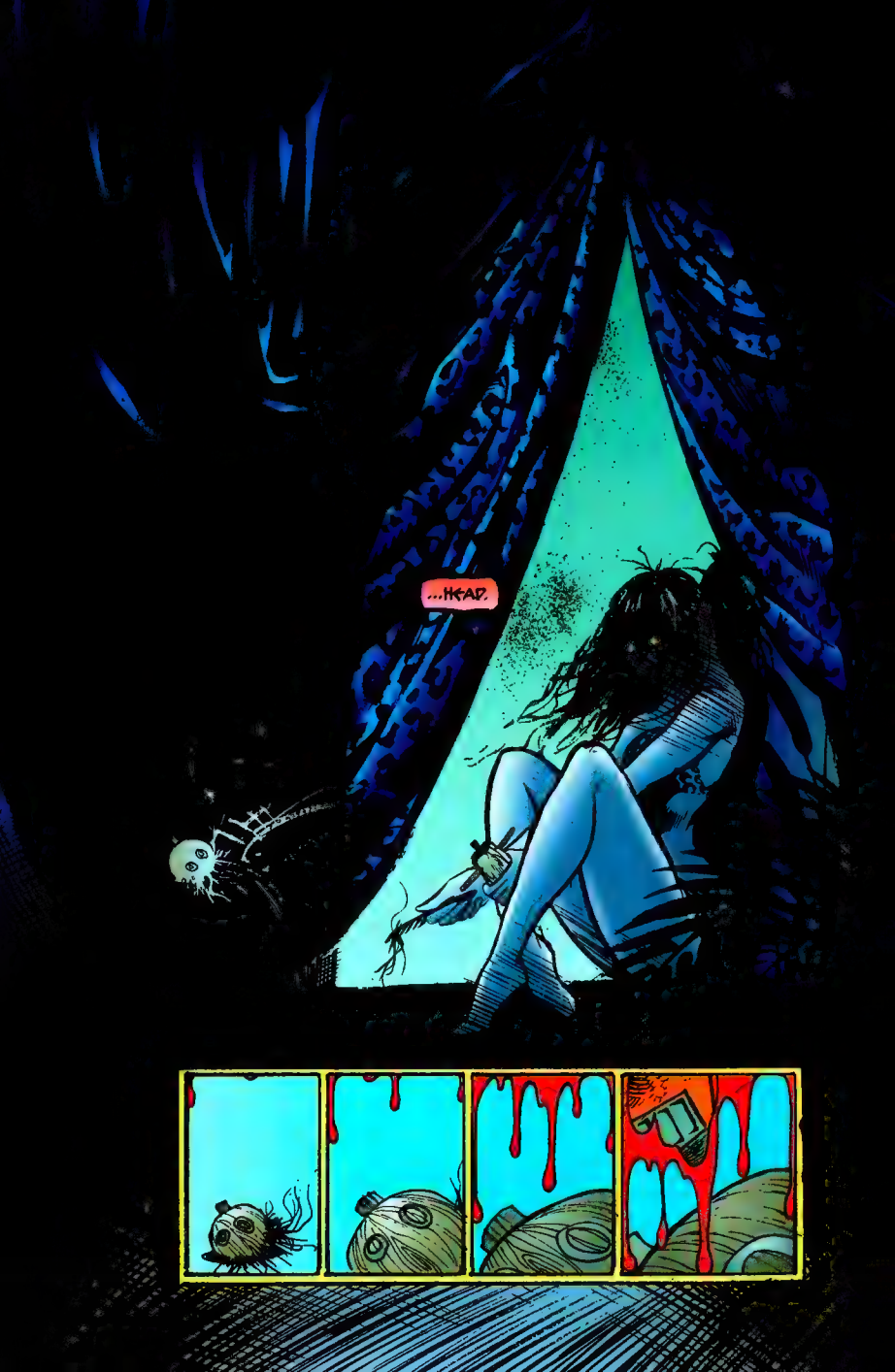

TRUST ME. YOU WILL FEAR ME!
I DOUBT IT.
YOU DON'T HAVE A CLUE WHO I AM.
KEEP HIM TALKING...SAW THROUGH THESE STRAPS...
BUT I CAN SEE THROUGH YOU LIKE GLASS, PAL!
YOU THINK I DON'T KNOW YOU? I'VE STALKED YOU!
SO? YOU SEE ME AS SOME LITTLE MISS PERFECT ...SOME MADONNA TO BE SEDUCED AND ABSORBED!
ACTUALLY, I'M PRETTY FLAWED. I'VE GOT A FAT STOMACH AND CHAFF MARKS WHERE MY JEANS CUT IN AND BAD BREATH FROM EATING THE WRONG STUFF! AND MY UNDERARMS ARE STUBBLY!
YOU'VE GOT A PROBLEM WITH WOMEN!

HRW PERCEPTIVE! DID YOU FIGURE THAT OUT WHEN I KIDNAPPED YOU... OR WHEN I TIED YOU UP WITH LEATHER STRAPS?
OF COURSE I'VE GOT A PROBLEM WITH WOMEN!
EVERYONE HAS A PROBLEM WITH WOMEN... BECAUSE WOMEN TAUNT AND TEASE! BECAUSE THEY ARE ATTRACTIVE AND THEN THEY PUNISH YOU FOR BEING ATTRACTED!
DO YOU DENY IT? AFTER ALL, I'M NOT THE ONE WHO WEARS UNDERWEAR OUTSIDE HER CLOTHES!

YOU CLAIM TO BE A "PRO-SEX FEMINIST"! YOU QUOTE CAMILLE PAGLIA... ENDLESSLY, I MIGHT ADD.
BUT WOULD A FEMINIST OF ANY STRIPE BE SO DELIBERATELY RISK-TAKING? OR ARE YOU ONLY A FEMINIST WHEN IT SUITS YOU?
YOU DROPPED OUT OF COLLEGE, SET UP THIS "FREE-LANCE SOCIAL WORK" OF YOURS, STARTED BAILING PEOPLE OUT OF JAIL, TRYING TO REFORM THEM...
YOU'RE NEARLY BROKE, SURROUNDED BY DANGEROUS/DESPERATE MEN... AND LOOK WHERE IT'S GOTTEN YOU!
SO THIS IS *MY* FAULT?
YOU *BROKE* INTO *MY LOCKED* HOUSE AND *KIDNAPPED* ME! THIS HAS *NOTHING* TO DO WITH THE *CLOTHES* I WEAR!
THIS HAS TO DO WITH THE FACT THAT YOU'RE *TWISTED* AS A CORKSCREW, AND LOOKING TO FIND SOMEONE... WOMEN, FEMINISM, PAGLIA, ME... TO BLAME IT ON!

SURE I TEST THE LIMITS...SO WHAT? QUIT WHINING LIKE A BROKEN DOLL AND GET ON WITH IT!
ARE YOU SURE THAT'S WHAT YOU WANT? I CAN TELL YOU THINGS, JULIE WINTERS, THINGS YOU'VE TRIED TO FORGET.
THINGS ABOUT ME, YOURSELF...EVEN THE MAXXX. THIS WHOLE ELABORATE FICTION YOU'VE BUILT UP TO PROTECT YOURSELF FROM THE TRUTH.
THIS DOLL IS TELLING ME THINGS I DON'T WANT TO HEAR! AND IF IT DOESN'T SHUT UP...
DO YOU REMEMBER SPIRIT ANIMALS, JULIE? DO YOU REMEMBER...?
...I'M GONNA BRUSH ITS HEAD RIGHT OFF!
...GETTING YOUR OWN SPIRIT ANIMAL? DO YOU REMEMBER WHERE YOU WERE? WHAT IT LOOKED LIKE?
AND WHAT THE ANIMAL'S NAME WAS?
IF THIS DOLL DOESN'T SHUT UP...!

...I'M GONNA BRUSH AND BRUSH AND BRUSH...
YOU WERE NEVER ABLE TO ACCEPT THE OTHER PLANE, JULIE... NEVER ABLE TO REVEL IN IT LIKE I AM... INSTEAD YOU HIDE IN THIS FANTASY! REMEMBER, JULIE? IT'S...
UNTIL I BRUSH OFF ITS...
...ALL IN YOUR...


...HEAD.

DEAD.
I AWOKE FROM THE DAYDREAM OF THE WILD PLACE AND TEETH WERE AT MY THROAT!
SO I AWOKE AND SLEW. BUT JULIE IS STILL KIDNAPPED AND THE JUNGLE QUEEN IS INSANE!
I DIDN'T PROTECT EITHER OF THEM. I FAILED.
I WISH IT WAS TIME FOR CHEERS, BUT IT'S NOT. IT'S TIME FOR VENGEANCE!
NEXT MONTH
JUNGLE FLOWERS GROWN IN BLOOD!

HEY, MAXX-HEADS! Sam here...Listen up!! You can stop with the column name ideas — the winner is...TY KELLER! with — well, just look above! A lot of people mentioned "Maxx Traxx", but he was the first. So one copy of a Glowing Maxx #1 is in the mail, along with a pin-up of The Hulk. (I know, I know, this is the Maxx, but I just wanted to draw The Hulk today. Marvel won't mind, as long as we don't print it here...)

Everyone's asking for glow-in-the-dark Maxxes, but I'm fresh out — remember, Ty Keller's got my copy. Your best bet is to hit up your local comic shop owner.

Couple more things, Reuben Rude's name was left on the credits to Maxx #1 instead of off, and Kevin Cunningham's name was left off instead of on. Oops. Also, a couple people asked if I'm selling original art. Thanks, but I'm holding onto it for now.

Anyway, here's some stuff that people wrote:

Probably the best Maxx drawing that I have ever seen. - Sam

Sam,
Does The Maxx ever stand up straight?
Dan Beckwith
Kent, Ohio

No.

Sam,
1. Was The Incredible Hulk #368 your first time working with Marvel Comics?
2. Will the Maxx ever fight Pitt?

John Wolfe
Hawthorne, New Jersey

1. Yup.
2. I hope not — Pitt would probably kill him.

Sam,
You should name your letter column "Bill", "the reply", or "far", it should definitely be a verb like eat or slurp. In general, there are far too few letter columns named after verbs (as well as names). Reading The Maxx made me happy. I was absorbed by your stylistic sense of visual movement like that of a movie. At the end, I (finger hurts) was left wanting more, and I hope you keep (gotta call Scott) with your pledge that the Maxx will come (I wonder if he reads this) out when you say it will. The dialogue was fantastic, it was completely quirky and full of life. I look forward (gotta clean the pad before everyone comes over tonight) to future issues. (Oh Crap! I was writing out loud!)
John Curtis
Oak Park, Illinois

Sam,
I really loved Maxx #1. It had the most coolest drawings. I like looking at ugly super-heroes all the time.
Vincent Marquez
San Diego, California

You want ugly art? You came to the right place! You ain't ever gonna get uglier than The Maxx.

Sam,
Damn! You guys kicked some booth with The Maxx. Noth'n can touch the story line or the art. The story is awesome, it brings reality and imagination into one — THE MAXX.
Gregory O.
Northridge, California

Hey Sam,
I just bought your comic, The Maxx and I want to say it's one of the better Image comics that I have. The way you draw, your people have sort of a

uniqueness to them. Personally, I like the bellbottoms because I'm sort of into that 14-year-old hippie stage.
[name withheld]

Thanx – a lot of older folks don't dig bellbottoms, but I don't care. To me, they're so uncool, they're cool!

Sam,
Greetings and Salutations! Congratulations on your new book! As soon as I heard your book was out I ran to my nearest comic shop, bust down their door, pushed aside all of the nosepickin' vacant-eyed-gaping mouthed speculator-collectors and grabbed a copy. As I feverishly fumbled my way through the pages, devouring the artwork, I noticed something. THE COLOR IS AMAZING!!! My highest possible commendation to Steve Oliff and Olyoptics.
I believe that in the past your art has been restrained by poor production qualities. I think that this book will be a stage for the masses to watch a great artist evolve into a better picture-smith. But enough about the art the writing is good too!!! The twelve page fight scenes, no long-winded speeches concerning origin, just a guy who lives in a box and happens to be purple and yellow and have one hell of an overbite.
Phlem Master Weenie
AKA The Grendel Khan
AKA Charles B. Roberson III

P.S. I still don't like bellbottoms.
P.S. I still don't care.

Dear Sam Kieth,
I'm not going to [illegible] I'm a big fan of comic books. My bo[illegible] a big fan and collector and he always lets me read his comic books. I always give them back to him and tell him they suck. Except for The Maxx book. I read it and thought it was great. So great in fact, that I'm going to start collecting Maxx books and items. The graphics are incredible and the writing is terrific.
Thanks,
Kamilah Boddie
Sacramento, California

Sam,
Finally a hero that is more realistic! The Maxx's home is great, The Maxx's face is great, and the The Maxx's feet are great. But one thing...bellbottoms!!! (Please stop!) The Maxx surprised me, I thought that he would be some great hero with great superpowers. Instead I get a bum from the alley with an ugly face and BIG FEET! I LOVE IT! KEEP IT UP.
Ajax
Bronx, New York

But wait – you like all the other unfashionable parts of The Maxx – bum, alley, ugly face, and big feet. We'll keep bellbottoms as long as they're unfashionable! OK?

Sam,
1. Could The Maxx's alter ego, Br'er Lappin, possibly be a reference to Br'er Rabbit of Disney fame?
2. How would I [illegible] a [illegible]-in-the-dark edition [illegible] Maxx [illegible]?
3. Just exactly wh[illegible] [illegible]?
Your faithful fan,
Mark Fidler
Allentown, New Jersey

1. Possibly.
2. [illegible] of money or be good pals with a [illegible] owner, or both.
3. [illegible] very funny.

Hey Sam
1. What happened to Maxx's hair? I kind of like him with his long mane (in his dream sequence). Did someone scalp him or is his hair under his costume?
2. What's with Australia? Is he a mutant Australian aborigine?
3. Why the babe? (Don't get me wrong, I like [illegible]

Frank Ruso
Woodside, New York

1. That's [illegible] like a straw head [illegible] real world, his hair is short.
2. O.K
3. I like her too – that's why the babe.

Dear Mr. Maxx,
I have questions!!
1. Is Maxx able to leap over small buildings in a single bound?
2. Is he faster than a speeding bullet?
3. Is he stronger than a runaway locomotive?
4. Isn't it true that Maxx is actually Superman attempting to lay low for a while after his death, in an elaborate scheme to cheat the life insurance company? Keep doodlin' those feet!!

"Just for Kicks"
Jeff Watson
Wasilla, Alaska

1. No.
2. No.
3. No.
4. Maybe... (Another foot one! What is it with these guys and feet?)

Sam,
I really like your work..I just have one question for you: When The Maxx goes to sleep, why does he go to Australia and grow hair and feathers?

Thank you,
Casey Hendley
Melbourne, Florida

Another hair one! That's NOT his hair, OK? OK? Geeezz!!

Sam,
Man oh man, you guys at Image can sure pack a wallop! Jus' picked up Maxx #1, it's all I've wanted and more, as are all the titles in the Image line. The babe is hot, Maxx is wild and the story seems wide open. I can't wait to see where you're taking us next. Keep it coming Man, it's Hot, Hot, Hot. Just to let you know, you guys are kicking Marvel's PIX&!!

Dan B.
Boca Raton, Florida

I guess I could [illegible] something politically correct here about how [illegible] hard feelings between Marvel and Image. But I don't think anyone's buying that anymore, are they?

Dear Sam,
Keep on doing the good job. I really like the style on Julie Winters with the bellbottoms. Next time have her with a tie-dye shirt on.

Jared Bautista
Stockton, California

Tie-dye shirt — you got it, bud. [illegible] — another bellbottom head. Yes. Yes.

Sam,
1. Why are Maxx's teeth shaped so funny?
2. Is that his costume?
3. How come Maxx #1 came out before Darker Image?
4. Does Maxx have any superpowers?

Your fan,
Eugene Wang
Fanwood, New Jersey

1. 'Cause they're easier to draw that way.
2. Yes. Subtle, huh? Purple tights blend right in with the crowd. (That's why Julie gave him a raincoat in #1.)
3. Because we screwed up. Don't worry — the stories in Darker Image are not directly con nected to Maxx #1. And if we did our job right, they can be read in any order...
4. If you count that his mask feeds off of his face. And the claws! Other than that, he's an average guy.

Sam,
1. Does The Maxx have lips?
2. What, or who, is making that "chung" sound? What does it signify?
3. Any cross-overs or "guests" lined up?
4. How big is The Maxx (height, weight?)

Alex Hunter
Toronto, Ontario, Canada

1. No. And I can't believe you just asked.
2. "Chung" means Maxx has a headache.
3. The Dragon shows up in a couple of pages, and maybe something else...
4. Height: short. Weight: heavy.

Hey Sam,
1. Where the hell can I obtain a Comics "Primer" #5 with The Maxx's first appearance? Do they even exist?! (Not in Arizona, they don't.)
2. Is that Maxx's teeth or a mask — Geezz?

Pompeo, Balbo
Scottsdale, Arizona

1. I don't know...they're pretty rare. I think there's about 4-5,000 out there. I would ask dealers at conventions or check back-issue bins at stores with used comics.
2. It's the mask's "teeth", Pomp.

Sam,
Are we ever going to see The Maxx's face without the mask over it?

Scott Kimbrough
Austin, Texas

I haven't decided yet. What do you guys think — should we never see Maxx's face?

Dear Sam and Bill,
I feel as if I have befriended the two of you over the past four years. If you think I'm talking Epicurus the Sage, you're absolutely right! The only reason I'm writing this letter is that if it gets printed, it might prompt others to throttle their store-owners until they get a copy.

Epicurus the Sage is one of the most amusing, canny, cool, crazy, funny, realistic, education (Hey! Remember it's cool too), dynamic, sexual (that should make the adult fans buy it), and reasonable satire of Greek philosophers ever made...Loebs and Kieth created an environment that clearly displays the ideas of Socrates, Plato and other Greek greats. For those in high school, they make great cliff-notes

for a Greek history class. Kieth's art jumps off the page; each panel and character demonstrates his appreciation for detail and individuality. Loeb's writing kicks tail.

Why am I writing about Epicurus? Because The Maxx is just as good! Dammit! Let's look at issue #1. The standard fantastic job Image and Olyoptics does with the colors is evident. From the blood on the cover to the solid gold "M" on page one, the hues capture and enchant the eye. Hell, they make the dirty alley look like a dirty alley! Mike Heisler's lettering warps your mind as you read. His choice of bold-face allows us to hear the voices of the characters. Damn! Maybe he thinks his job is more than rote copying. The grass in the captions are cool, too.

Loebs, you know you're good. I don't know what to say about the dialogue you weave beyond; it's real as can be. (Did you come up with the Cheers reference on page #1? It reads like you.)

Kieth, page ten puts the last hundred issues of X-men to shame. This book embodies everything unique in your style. Your quirky paneling never seems to confuse the reader. There's nothing left to be said about your big feet. You know what I mean. The art is fluid and pulsing.
This one's the winner.

To answer your question, I read the licensing label on the inside cover because I was reeeealy bored.

Once again, both of you deserve all of the acclaim you're receiving. I can't wait for The Maxx's tale to unfold.
Eager for another four years,
Mike Rubin
Morristown, New Jersey

Wow.

Sam,
Who's the dude with the cape?
Christopher Shea
Worcester, Massachusetts

Mr. Gone! But by now you already know that...

Dear Sam,

1. Where does Maxx come from?
2. Who is Mr. Gone and how does he know Maxx?
3. What's with the obscene phone calls that Julia has been getting?
4. Speaking of Julia, what's her problem any way? Why is she so cold?
5. What's an Isz?
6. Are you ever gonna take off the Maxx's mask?
7. Is it just me or is Maxx giving everyone the finger?
8. Are those claws?
9. If so, could they cut through anything?
10. Will The Maxx and Julia ever get together? Until The Maxx stands straight, make mine Image!

Gene Brice
Brooklyn, New York

1. Keep reading.
2. Maxx's arch rival. Gone is the only one who can travel freely between both worlds, and he is the only one who doesn't forget the real world when he enters the outback.
3. Mr. Gone is a bit socially dysfunctional, but he's working on it.
4. This issue should explain that Julie's got many things buried inside that make her appear cold.
5. Good question. This issue has half the answer, and the next issue has the other half! By the way, one "Is" is an "Is", and two of 'em make "Isz" (pronounced "iss-uss").
6. That could be tricky, since the mask is alive and tends to eat off the fingers of anyone who tries to remove it? Also, there's those nasty dreams Maxx keeps having, that he's something other than normal under there.
7. It's just you, Gene.
8-9. Yes, they're claws, but remember: Maxx only has a normal man's strength to drive those claws through anything.
10. Keep on reading...

Dear Sam Kieth,
Your comic, Maxx, is one of the best that I have ever seen. The story is great and the art is totally cool...I'm very glad that you decided to name your book after my dog. He loves to read your comic. In fact, he has his own copy ever since he stepped on mine and ripped the cover off. I guess I'll leave you alone so you can keep up the most eexxcceell-lleenntt work.

Sam's #1 (approx.) Fan,
Dan Marcus
Niles, Illinois

P.S. Can you tell me how I could get one or two of your ashcan books?
P.P.S. My dog says "Ruff Ruff Grrrr, Bark."

Unless we blew it, there should be an ad for them in this issue. Otherwise, send requests to Bowe and Board, 9180 East Indian Bend Road, F10, Scottsdale, Arizona 85250.

Dear Sam,
Is it just me or is the similarity between The Leopard Queen and Julie Winters something else?
Andy Hsu
Providence, Rhode Island

No, Andy, it's not just you! The Jungle Queen and Julie are the same person! When we see the modern world, that's through Julie's eyes, and the outback is through Maxx's eyes. Also, there's only one Maxx. I know – it's confusing, but it gets clearer...I think...

Dear Sam,
Maxx is awesome! I loved the stories in Darker Image and The Maxx and the art is incredible. I can't compare this book to any other that I've read! It's so weird, I love it! The social worker is hot as balls! (Can I say that?) The colors in this comic are excellent. I read your interview in Wizard 20. MAN! When you say you'll draw big feet, you really draw big feet! I also read that the dude with the cape is called Mr. Gone. That guy is wicked! (He looks like a totem-pole with a cape!) This comic is really original, and in case I didn't explain it in the above context, I'm very impressed!
Matt Mahan
Arcadia, Oklahoma

TOTEM-POLE?

Dear Sam,
I just finished reading The Maxx #1 and I must say that now that you're doing your own book, you have definitely redefined the darker and more gruesome comic character...Compliment Bill on his great dialogue job; he added all the right phrases at all the right times.
David Bird
Fredericksburg, Virginia

AMEN.

Dear Sam,
Wow, Wow, WOW! What an awesome work of art. Maxx is one of the best comics I have ever read. Hey Kieth, are you really human? "Cause there ain't no way a regular guy can accomplish what you've achieved in Maxx #1. It blows all the other comics out of the water.
Maxx is not your everyday bland superhero, but a guy with a ferocity of emotions. It is intense how you delve into the psychology of the guy. And let me tell you, a lot of comics try to develop their characters that way, but they don't compare to The Maxx.
Finally we have a comic with awesome artwork and a great story line to go with it. Hey, make mine Maxx any and every time, baby!
Your devoted Fan For Life.
Johny O.
Northridge,
California

Dear Sam,
Being the old fashioned sort whose preferred reading includes old farts like Peter Bagge, the Hernandez Brothers and Chester Brown, I feel a bit out of my league commenting on these new-fangled action comics. There's so much byzantine intensity in the layouts - I keep flipping through the book try-

ing to figure out if those odd-shaped panels spell out secret messages or not. "Buy More Tang" maybe?

Everything looks so cool and groovy. You've done an excellent job of establishing your hero's presence, if nothing else – this great curled up shape, powerful but slumbering...Not having seen any previous appearances of The Maxx, I have no idea whether there's a normal human inside the suit. I get the impression he's an alien brought to this dimension, but he also seems to have a lot of characteristics of an earth elemental...even his muttering (which is great, by the way – the last line of the book actually made me laugh out loud, quite a feat considering that I'd spent the previous two hours putting together a chest of drawers and smashing my thumbs to atoms with a hammer.)

Okay, on to the women. If you hadn't mentioned it, I doubt that I'd pick up on the Camille Paglia thing...the Frazetta thing I got, but the Paglia was more oblique. Coincidentally, I just got the new Vanity Fair and was reading the cover story on Sharon Stone. It seems both Paglia and Naomi Wolfe (author of The Beauty Myth) loved Stone in Basic Instinct (which I've yet to see, since she isn't afraid to use the power of her sexuality). Judy seems to fit into the same mold, although just why she dresses like a hooker and then denies it is still unexplained. So far, all we know, is that she dresses in body conscious clothing, and thinks that women get raped we're "asking for it" through their stupid behavior. I take it that in Judy's world, the definition of "asking for it" does not include wearing fishnet panties. (Not that I'm saying that it should, but I wouldn't wear them down to the car wash, if you know what I mean.) Perhaps she is in for just a bit of a comeuppance?

On the surface you seem to have created yet another book where women who flaunt their sexuality are horribly murdered. (Even Glorie, who is not conventionally beautiful by any means, wears what most would label "skimpy" clothing and is portrayed as a sex object, at least in Tommy's mind.) This is the oldest trick in the book, and most men (and some women) do it unconsciously. I think you are doing it consciously. Just watch out for those gratuitously badly dressed women.

Three things before I go:

1. Great coloring.
2. Great lettering (The CHUNG! CHUNG! running through the first section was reminiscent of Ken Bruzenak at his best.)
3. Page...uh...hey put in page #s for cripe's sake...Page 18, panel 4..."I hurt, Tommy". This is a classic Claremontism, and no one is allowed to use it anymore, so watch it, okay?

Heidi McDonald
Somewhere in L.A.

Thanx, Heidi - I can use the help! We'll watch our P's and Q's and work on it. You know, we need some more feedback on the stories. Are they sexist? Exploitational? Write ASAP!

- Later

KALLING ALL KIETH KOLLECTORS!

...And you know who you are! Before snappy Sam rocketed to superstardom with *The Maxx*, before he turned heads with his work on *Wolverine*, before even *Sandman*, he created hundreds of pages' worth of wild 'n' woolly stuff for small-press and alternative comics. ***I Before E*** collects Sam's early, obscure horror, sci-fi, and humor work, in two issues totaling *over 100 pages* of comics and artwork, including the very earliest incarnation of *The Maxx*, and featuring an intro by *Maxx* scribe Bill Messner-Loebs! Each issue is available for $5.50 postpaid, or both for $10.00! Send check or money order to **Fantagraphics Books, 7563 Lake City Way NE, Seattle, WA 98115** and allow four to six weeks for delivery of your comics. NOTE: Since Sam's earliest work could be a little raunchy, we must ask that you be 18 YEARS OR OLDER to order, and include an age statement!